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General Assembly

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Fifty-sixth session
Fifth Committee
Agenda item 124
Pattern of conferences

Simultaneous availability of parliamentary documentation in the six official languages on the United Nations web site*

Note by the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 36/117 B of 10 December 1981, the General Assembly reiterated its deep concern at the steady lengthening of delays in the distribution of documents in the different official languages and decided that documents "shall be given effective simultaneous distribution" in the official and working languages of the organs of the United Nations. This decision, which mandates that no language version of a particular document, including its original language version, may be released for distribution until all the other required language versions are available, was reiterated in resolutions 42/207 C of 11 December 1987, 50/11 of 2 November 1995 and 53/208 B of 18 December 1998.

2. In section III, paragraph 5, of its resolution 55/222 of 23 December 2000, the General Assembly decided "that there should not be any exemption to the rule that documents must be distributed in all official languages", and emphasized the principle "that all documents must be distributed simultaneously in all official languages before they are made available on United Nations web sites".

3. The General Assembly deeply regretted in section III, paragraph 3, of its resolution 56/242 of 24 December 2001, "the failure of author departments to abide by section III, paragraph 5, of its resolution 55/222", and in this regard requested the Secretary-General "to take corrective measures to ensure the full implementation of this provision and to report to the General Assembly in the first part of its resumed fifty-sixth session".

* Due to the short length of this document, no summary is provided. The recommendation for action is presented in bold at the end of part IV, Conclusion.

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II. Current practice

4. Most parliamentary documentation posted on the United Nations web site strictly follows the simultaneous availability rule. This is ensured by the fact that these documents are made available on the web site by copying them from the Official Document System (ODS) after they are released on that system in accordance with the same rules. The process of posting documents on the United Nations web site was discussed in detail in document A/C.5/56/12.

5. It must be emphasized that posting parliamentary documents on the web site, as stated above, is an interim arrangement pending the opening up of the ODS. Given the current level of staffing, not all documents can be posted on the web site in all languages at the same time. The Secretariat continues to make every effort to implement the provisions of resolution 55/222.

6. In its report under item 32 "Multilingualism" of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly (A/56/656, para. 32), the Secretary-General stated that various author departments of the Secretariat and/or United Nations bodies provide, as a courtesy, advance copies of reports and other documents, at times in draft form, in hard copy or on the web site of the department or office.

7. This courtesy is extended in response to informal requests by organs or committees of the United Nations or by individual delegations, and often in connection with the run-up to major intergovernmental meetings and conferences. These advance copies are almost invariably in English.

III. Corrective measures

8. The question of the posting of official documents on the web site of the United Nations prior to their official simultaneous issuance in all official languages has been brought to the attention of author departments by the Department of Public Information and by the Coordinator for Multilingualism. They have been apprised in this regard of the relevant resolutions, as well as the appropriate administrative instructions in the ST/AI/189 series on the control and limitation of documentation.

9. In order to further help ensure compliance with the aforementioned resolutions and instructions, the Publications Board approved an administrative instruction on United Nations Internet publishing (ST/AI/2001/5).

10. In addition, a Working Group on Internet Matters has been established to review the guidelines relating to the posting of, inter alia, official documents on the web site of the United Nations.

11. These guidelines establish an administrative foundation and framework for maintaining the United Nations web site and for the development and implementation of policies concerning Internet projects. These guidelines set out the procedures and objectives for disseminating United Nations materials over the Internet.

12. Paragraph 3.17 of ST/AI/2001/5 states: "In general, parliamentary documentation must be posted in accordance with policies governing its official dissemination. Advance text and unedited draft or incomplete versions of parliamentary documentation should not be disseminated on the Internet, except in

consultation with the Chairman of the concerned body and its Secretary, with an appropriate disclaimer."

13. In paragraph 34 of his report contained in document A/56/656, the Secretary-General stated that it was up to Member States to take a position on the pattern of ad hoc availability of courtesy draft or advance copies of documents. Resolution 56/262 of 15 February 2002 adopted in connection with the consideration of the above-mentioned report, however, did not address the matter.

IV. Conclusion

14. The Committee may wish to note the corrective measures taken pursuant to section III of General Assembly resolution 55/222.

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Agenda item 123
Programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003

Comprehensive implementation of the outcome of and follow-up to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.84/Rev.1

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

Summary

At its 61st meeting, on 26 February 2002, the Third Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.84/Rev.1, as orally revised. The programme budget implications of that draft resolution amounting to a requirement for additional appropriations of $1,178,700 for the biennium 2002-2003 were before the Committee in document A/C.3/56/L.87, and are reproduced below for consideration by the Fifth Committee.

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I. Requests contained in the draft resolution

1. Operative paragraphs 12, 13 and 14 of draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.84/Rev.1, as orally revised, entitled "Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia .nd Related Intolerance", read as follows:

> "*The General Assembly*,
>
> "...
>
> "12. *Supports* the decision by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to establish an anti-discrimination unit to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and to promote equality and non-discrimination;
>
> "13. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in accordance with the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, to appoint five independent eminent experts, one from each region, from among candidates proposed by the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights, after consultation with the regional groups, to follow the implementation of the provisions of the Declaration and Programme of Action;
>
> "14. *Requests* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in follow-up to the Conference, to cooperate with these five independent eminent experts, and to report annually to the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights, taking into account information and views provided by States, relevant human rights treaty bodies, special procedures and other mechanisms of the Commission, international, regional and non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions;".

II. Relationship of the proposed requests to the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 and to the proposed programme of work for the biennium 2002-2003

2. The requests contained in operative paragraphs 12, 13 and 14 of the draft resolution are associated with programme 19, Human rights, of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 and to section 22, Human rights, of the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003.

III. Activities by which the proposed requests would be implemented

3. Should the draft resolution be adopted, the following activities would be carried out during the biennium 2002-2003:

(a) Establishment of the Anti-Discrimination Unit, within the Activities and Programmes Branch, to ensure, initiate, mainstream and monitor implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action:

(i) The responsibilities of the Unit would include the following:

- To compile and prepare an annual progress report on the implementation of the outcome of and follow-up to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. The report would be submitted to the Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly;

- To produce briefing notes, speeches, progress reports, documents related to coordination and administrative aspects, fund-raising documents for donor organizations and project documents for the Office, as and when needed;

- Maintain and strengthen links that were developed around the world during 2000 and 2001 in preparation for the Conference. Hundreds of NGOs attended the Conference; they, especially the newly emerging groups among them, should be encouraged to become involved in the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action;

- Continue and strengthen regular liaison with parliamentarians, religious leaders, business and trade unions, and promote their involvement in follow-up activities;

- Continue and strengthen active liaison with United Nations agencies and other intergovernmental bodies on follow-up to the Conference, organize regular consultations with those bodies, and develop and implement joint activities with them;

- The organization of five regional meetings to discuss the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action, as well as the organization of two expert seminars under the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination;

- To provide support to the group of five independent eminent persons;

- Administration of the proposed small grants scheme for selected follow-up activities to be undertaken by national institutions and other national bodies;

(ii) The Unit would include three Professional posts (one P-5, and two P-3) and one General Service post. The main functions of each post would be as follows:

- **Coordinator (P-5)**:

– Manage and coordinate the implementation of the substantive and organizational tasks assigned to the Anti-Discrimination Unit;

– Develop and coordinate specific strategies, including at the regional level that seek to implement the framework of various activities and programmes assigned to the Unit;

– Undertake high-level representation at related meetings and conferences, and identify, where necessary, potential themes and issues requiring consideration and action by the Secretariat;

– Participate in the planning and organization of specific meetings and seminars;

– Work in close collaboration with other members of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights staff, field representatives and United Nations country teams in developing worldwide awareness, knowledge and understanding of the follow-up process;

• **Research Officers (two P-3)**:

– Prepare reports and documents on subjects relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action;

– Undertake substantive research in connection with follow-up programmes;

– Determine sources that are likely to contain relevant information on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and develop contacts with those sources to obtain new and additional information;

– Participate in the organizational and substantive aspects of meetings, seminars and symposia planned or supported by the Office of the High Commissioner;

– Assist in drafting reports, servicing meetings, and seminars;

– Assist in coordinating fund-raising campaigns, as appropriate;

– Respond to requests for information relating to the follow-up process;

– Undertake and coordinate public information and awareness-creation activities;

– Ensure the integration of data relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action in the human rights database.

• **Programme Assistant (one General Service)**: to provide administrative support to the work of the Anti-Discrimination Unit;

(b) Convening of three meetings of five independent eminent experts. In paragraph 14 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly requests the High Commissioner to cooperate with five independent eminent experts, one from each region, to follow the implementation of the provisions of the Declaration and Programme of Action. As requested in paragraph 13 of the draft resolution, these eminent persons would be appointed by the Secretary-General from among candidates proposed by the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights, after consultation with the regional groups. The five eminent persons will meet twice in Geneva in 2002 and once in 2003.

(c) Convening of five regional expert meetings to discuss the implementation of the outcome of and follow-up to the World Conference:

(i) Two expert meetings would be convened during 2002, in Latin America and Africa, and three during 2003 — for Asia, Eastern Europe and States that are members of the Western Group. Aspects to be discussed at those meetings would include: (1) an analysis of provisions of the Durban documents, including those that are particularly meaningful in the region; (2) national action plans; (3) technical cooperation to combat racism in the region; (4) implementation by States, United Nations agencies, national institutions, NGOs, youth groups; and (5) best practices;

(ii) Ten renowned experts (experts from United Nations mechanisms and treaty bodies, academics and representatives of NGOS, youth and civil society) from each region would be invited to each regional meeting in order to present background papers and discuss their findings among themselves. The audience would also include representatives of Governments, United Nations bodies and specialized agencies;

The outcome of the expert seminars would be presented to the Commission on Human Rights in 2003 and 2004 during its debate under the agenda item "Elimination of racism and racial discrimination".

(d) Support would be provided for some 10 awareness-raising projects with national institutions and NGOs. In order to reach victims on the ground, activities at the national level should also be supported. The Programme of Action specifically mandates, among others, national human rights institutions, non-governmental organizations and youth groups to be involved in the follow-up to the Conference. A small grants scheme funded through extrabudgetary resources would be established for selected follow-up activities to be undertaken by national institutions and other national bodies. It would support some 10 selected awareness-building projects in the five regions on specific themes and topics related to the Programme of Action to raise awareness and provide for concrete initiatives at the national level regarding the outcome of the Conference;

(e) A database would be established and its accessibility maintained as much as possible for the benefit of those in authority and the public at large, through its web site and by other appropriate means. The database would contain information on:

(i) Practical means to address racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, particularly international and regional instruments and national legislation, including anti-discrimination legislation, as well as legal means to combat racial discrimination;

(ii) Remedies available through international mechanisms to victims of racial discrimination, as well as national remedies, and educational and preventive programmes implemented in various countries and regions;

(iii) Best practices to address racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

(iv) Opportunities for technical cooperation;

(v) Academic studies and specialized documents.

IV. Modification required in the programme of work for 2002-2003

4. The narrative of section 22 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 would be modified as follows:

Outputs

Paragraph 22.44

(a) Servicing of intergovernmental and expert bodies

Under "(i) General Assembly: parliamentary documentation", add the output "Report on the implementation of the provisions of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (2)".

After subparagraph (iv), add the following subparagraph:

"(v) Expert meetings. Five eminent experts (3); regional meetings (5)".

V. Indication of additional requirements

5. Should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, the additional requirements for the implementation of the programme of work described above would amount to $1,178,700. The cost plan is as follows:

Additional requirements	*United States dollars*	
Section 22, Human rights		**Total**
Posts to be established for the Anti-Discrimination Unit[a]		
One P-5 Coordinator	141 300	
Two P-3 Research Officers	207 600	
One General Service staff	93 900	442 800
Other staff costs		18 200
Experts:		
Five eminent independent experts		
Travel and DSA for three meetings in Geneva (two in 2002 and one in 2003)	63 900	
Regional meetings (two in 2002 and three in 2003)		
Travel and DSA for five regional meetings	455 600	519 500
Travel of staff: travel and DSA to the five regional meetings and to New York		70 500
General operating expenses		
Maintenance of office and electronic data-processing equipment		22 600
Supplies and materials		1 200
Section 22, Human rights		**1 074 800**
Section 32, Staff assessment (to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment)		**103 900**
Total		**1 178 700**

[a] Estimated at a vacancy rate of 50 per cent for the Professional category and 65 per cent for the General Service category, in accordance with existing practice for new positions for the biennium 2002-2003.

6. No provision has been made under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 for activities related to the follow-up to the Conference. At this stage, it is not anticipated that these requirements could be absorbed from within the existing resources under section 22, Human rights, of the programme budget for that biennium.

VI. Contingency fund

7. It will be recalled that under the procedure established by the General Assembly in its resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986, a contingency fund is established each biennium to accommodate additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the approved programme budget. Under the same procedure, if additional expenditures proposed exceed the resources available from the contingency fund, such activities can be implemented only through the redeployment of resources available from low-priority areas or the modification of existing activities.

8. Should it not prove possible to meet the cost required from the contingency fund, the activities and outputs to be carried out under section 22 foreseen for the biennium 2002-2003 would have to be further reprogrammed and modified beyond the proposals included in the present statement.

VII. Summary

9. **In summary, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.84/Rev.1, as orally revised, it would give rise to additional requirements for the biennium 2002-2003 under sections 22, Human rights, and 32, Staff assessment, of the programme budget for that biennium.**

10. **It is not possible at this stage to identify activities within section 22 that could be terminated, deferred, curtailed or modified during the biennium.**

11. **Consequently, an additional provision would be required over and above the regular budget resources appropriated for the biennium 2002-2003. That provision would represent a charge against the contingency fund and, as such, would require an increase in appropriations for the biennium 2002-2003 as follows:**

Section 22, Human rights	**$1 074 800**
Section 32, Staff assessment (to be offset by an equivalent amount under Income Section 1, Income from staff assessment)	**103 900**
Total	**$1 178 700**

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Programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003

Utilization of the provision for special political missions under section 3, Political affairs

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 56/254 A of 24 December 2001, appropriated under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 an amount of $98,338,700 for special political missions.

2. As described in paragraph 3.46 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003, the utilization of the amount would be subject to individual legislative mandates and approval by the General Assembly as and when the Security Council and/or the Assembly establish or renew such mandates.

3. By its resolution 56/255 of 24 December 2001, the General Assembly approved charges amounting to $11,113,400 for special political missions relating to matters of which the Security Council is seized. By adopting resolutions 56/220 A and B of 21 December 2001 concerning the situation in Afghanistan; 56/223 of 24 December on the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala; 56/224 of 24 December 2001 concerning the situation in Central America; and 56/231 of 24 December 2001 concerning the situation of human rights in Myanmar, the Assembly further approved charges amounting to $22,576,900 for special missions authorized by the Assembly.

4. During the first part of the resumed fifty-sixth session, the General Assembly will have approved, in the context of estimates pertaining to matters of which the Security Council is seized, additional charges totalling $30,345,100 against the provision of $98,338,700 for special political missions, as detailed in the annex to the present report.

5. The Fifth Committee may wish to take note that an unallocated balance of $34,303,300 remains against the provision of $98,338,700 for special political missions for 2002-2003.

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Annex

Provision for special political missions, under section 3, Political affairs

		(Thousands of United States dollars)
Amount appropriated at current 2002-2003 rates		**98 338.7**
Utilization of the provision:		
A. Charges approved during first part of the fifty-sixth session:		
1. The situation in Central America — United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) (A/C.5/56/26, A/56/705, A/56/747 and resolution 56/223)	14 755.1	
2. The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development (A/C.5/56/27, A/56/709, A/56/750 and resolution 56/224)	188.5	
3. Human rights questions: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (A/C.5/56/24 and A/C.5/56/SR.33, A/56/748 and resolution 56/231)	277.9	
4. The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (A/C.5/56/31, A/56/720, A/C.5/56/25 and resolution 56/220)	7 355.4	
5. Estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council is seized (A/C.5/56/25 and Add.1 and 2; A/56/7/Add.5-7 and resolution 56/255)	11 113.4	
Total charges approved during the first part of the fifty-sixth session		**33 690.3**
B. Charges requested for approval during the first part of the resumed fifty-sixth session:		
1. Estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council is seized (A/C.5/56/25 and Add.1-3; A/56/7/Add.6-8; A/C.5/56/SR.47, 48 and ___)	30 345.1	
Total charges requested for approval during the first part of the resumed fifty-sixth session		**30 345.1**
Total		**64 035.4**
Unallocated balance		**34 303.3**

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Programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.47

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

1. Under the terms of draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.47, the General Assembly would decide that the measures taken by the Secretary-General should not be implemented and would request the Secretary-General to restore the services that have been reduced. Under the terms of the same resolution the General Assembly would also request the Secretary-General to present a report containing proposals on the implementation of its resolution 56/254 of 24 December 2001 in a way that does not affect the services provided for Member States, taking into consideration the current budgetary procedures, the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, and the Financial Regulations and Rules, for its consideration and approval at its resumed fifty-sixth session.

2. It should be recalled that, in resolution 56/254, the General Assembly approved appropriations for the biennium 2002-2003 in the amount of $2,625,178,700. It should be further recalled that the programme budget proposed and related statements of programme budget implications and revised estimates stood at $2.7 billion and that the Assembly decided to effect reductions under a number of specific objects of expenditure in resolution 56/253, in particular in paragraph 70. Those reductions have left the Organization with insufficient resources to maintain services for meetings, to manage the premises and to provide information technology services at existing levels. The administration of the budget within the level decided by the General Assembly has therefore required that appropriate measures be taken.

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3. If the level of the budget appropriations is to be maintained at $2,625,178,700 as decided by the Assembly, these measures cannot be discontinued, as requested in the draft resolution.

4. With regard to the request for a report, given the areas in which the Assembly has decided to make reductions, it would not be possible to make proposals to implement the budget at the level decided without affecting the services provided for Member States.